

Message Text

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PAGE 01 COLOMB 01136 110817Z
ACTION INR-10

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FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
TO AMEMBASSY PARIS
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 9765
AMEMBASSY LONDON

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE COLOMBO 1136

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINR, CE
SUBJECT: SRI LANKA NAMES VERNON L.B. MENDIS AMBASSADOR TO FRANCE

1. THE GOVERNMENT OF SRI LANKA HAS ANNOUNCED THE APPOINTMENT OF VERNON L.B.MENDIS AS AMBASSADOR TO FRANCE. WITH 28 YEARS SERVICE, MENDIS IS SRI LANKA'S HIGHEST-RANKING CAREER FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICER.

2. MENDIS WAS ASSIGNED AS HIGH COMMISSIONER TO CANADA IN 1974 AND AS HIGH COMMISSIONER TO THE U.K. IN 1975. HE EARLIER WAS THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE FOREIGN SERVICE, THE SENIOR CAREER POSITION IN THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. HE JOINED THE FOREIGN SERVICE IN 1948. IN ADDITION TO HIS RECENT OTTAWA AND LONDON ASSIGNMENTS, HE SERVED IN LONDON (1950-51), WASHINGTON (1951-53), TOKYO (1953-55), PARIS (1955-58), MOSCOW (1958-1960), AND NEW DELHI (1966-68). HE WAS ALSO SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE NON-ALIGNED SUMMIT CONFERENCE HELD IN COLOMBO IN 1976.

3. MENDIS WAS BORN [Sensitive Information Removed Per NARA 08 DEC 2014], WAS EDUCATED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CEYLON (B.A. HONORS), AND AT LONDON UNIVERSITY (M.A.), AND IS AN HISTORIAN BY TRAINING AND INCLINATION. HE HAS WRITTEN AT LEAST ONE BOOK,
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THE AVENT OF THE BRITISH TO CEYLON. HIS PRIME INTEREST IS NAPOLEONIC HISTORY.

4. MENDIS IS DESCRIBED AS ONE WHO THINKS RAPIDLY AND SPEAKS IN A CLIPPED, STACCATO STYLE WHICH AT FIRST SEEMS BRUSQUE. HOWEVER, HE IS MOST CORDIAL SOCIALLY AND IN COLOMBO WAS FRIENDLY AND HELPFUL TO THE

EMBASSY. IN OTTAWA HE WAS FOUND TO BE RELAXED, FRIENDLY,
WIDELY INFORMED AND ARTICULATE.

5. MRS.MENDIS,PADMA (PADDY), IS INTELLIGENT, ATTRACTIVE,
AND POLISHED,AND PARTICIPATES ACTIVELY IN SOCIAL FUNCTIONS
RELATED TO HER HUSBAND'S WORK. THE MENDISES HAVE ONE SON,
WHO IN 1974 WAS STUDYING AT THE MASSACHUSETTES INSTITUTE OF
TECHNOLOGY.

6. EXCEPT FOR REFERENCE TO HIS BEING SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE
1976 NAM SUMMIT CONFERENCE,EMBASSY FILES HAVE NO BIOGRAPHIC
INFORMATION ON MDNDIS LATER THAN 1974. EMBASSY LONDON MAY BE
ABLE TO COMMENT ON HIS PERFORMANCE IN LONDON AND ON HIS
RECENT ATTITUDES AND RELATIONS WITH AMERICANS THERE.
WRIGGINS

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Message Attributes

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